

S E C R E T

DCI BRIEFING

22 May 1961

FRANCE-ALGERIA

- I. 20 May opening of French-Algerian negotiations at Evian is brightest streak on De Gaulle's horizon, darkened by 22-25 April military revolt which in the long run has probably damaged his power position domestically as well as internationally.
  - A. Provisional Algerian Government (PAG) representatives in general seemed favorably impressed by opening session, but they reacted negatively to French announcement of a unilateral cease-fire; rebel terrorist activity continues in Algeria.
    1. PAG has received private assurances that De Gaulle recognizes them as principal element in deciding future of Algeria.
    2. PAG also impressed by De Gaulle's smashing of "fascist" generals' revolt, and feel he is only Frenchman both willing and able to negotiate (as he has publicly promised) an independent Algeria.
  - B. Nevertheless, ultimate prospects not necessarily bright; long and difficult bargaining in prospect.
    1. Issues of control of Sahara and its resources, guarantees for European settlers, and French desire to retain military bases will be particularly thorny.
- II. De Gaulle's internal position was severely shaken by military revolt which caught him by surprise and revealed numerous cases of weak or divided loyalty in armed services and civilian administration.

- A. Extensive purges of armed forces and civil service now under way, but already seem less draconian in scope than when first announced.
1. If he overdoes purges, he risks bitter resentment of army and air force officer corps for destroying their pride and morale, as well as civilian resentment against too drastic punishment for respected officers like Challe.
  2. Otherwise, he risks not getting at bottom of apparently deep-laid plots to sabotage his Algerian policy and, if necessary, overthrow him to attain this.
- B. Potential for serious trouble still great, particularly in Algeria but also in France itself.
1. In Algeria, two of four generals who led revolt still at large, and security forces seem unable to root out secret settler organization--believed very well armed--threatening disorders and reprisals. Moslems also increasingly restless.
  2. In France, plastic bomb attacks continue and threats against leading Gaullists multiplying.
  3. Rightist extremists now probably sufficiently desperate to consider assassination of De Gaulle as only "sure" way to block his Algerian policy.
- C. Public support which rallied to De Gaulle at height of April crisis has again slacked off to business-as-usual and apathy.

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1. Extraordinary powers he assumed to crush revolt and clean up afterwards are generally unpopular.
2. He has alienated rightists completely, but has not yet overtly bid for non-Communist left and center support as his power base to carry through entire Gaullist program-- both Algerian settlement and major reforms in France.

III. Internationally, De Gaulle preparing to welcome President Kennedy  
31 May - 2 June.

- A. He'll push hard during visit to get more tripartite western (US-UK-French) global policy and strategy coordination.
- B. He shows no signs of backing down on creation of French nuclear striking force, or of being more amenable on integration of French forces under NATO.

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